

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, and 5 have been canceled. Independent claims 3 and 4 have been amended. The application now includes claims 2, 4, and 6-10.

Claim 3 has been amended to incorporate the features of claims 1 and 2. Because claim 3 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101, and because it does satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 101 should now be moot.

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected for indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and claims 1-10 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,167,383 to Henson. Both rejections are overcome by the amendments above (in summary, claim 3 incorporates the features of claims 1 and 2, and claim 4 has been amended to include the feature of claim 5), and the explanation below.

To address concerns raised in connection with the rejection lodged under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and to simultaneously address the anticipation rejection, the undersigned offers the following comments.

U.S. Patent 6,167,383 to Henson maps a "configurable machines" to a "prescribed customer set". As stated in the abstract, Henson

"...enables a custom configuration of a computer system according to an identification of a user belonging to a prescribed customer set. "

This is a customer centric concept.

In sharp contrast, the present invention describes and claims a way to define the scope of a solution bundle as a subset of the master catalog, with special pricing and incentives applied. This is a supplier centric concept. This invention is to the advantage of the supplier, as the fulfillment system is able to process a solution bundle (with special pricing) without requiring special processing, as long as the fulfillment system recognizes the concept of "entitled groups" (a.k.a.. product catalog subsets.) Claims 3 and 4 now particularly include and reference the use and provisioning of catalog

subsets.

As explained on page 3, lines 9-27 of the application:

"The distinction of this invention is the novel and unique adaptive reuse of methods and tools supporting a preexisting function called entitled groups which implements distinguished catalog subsets, but was never intended to support the requirements of customized solution bundles. By observing that customized solution bundles can be mapped into subset catalogs with entitled pricing and business rules applied, the implementation is simple and significantly straight forward. In fact, to the back-end fulfillment systems and ancillary e-commerce services a customized solution bundle looks no different and is essentially treated the same as any subset catalog with entitled price, provided that the fulfillment system and services recognize a unique encoding that identifies each marketable item to a subset catalog. We note both entitled groups and customized solution bundles support the concept to distinguished subsets; however, the functional requirements are significantly different between the two. Additionally, subset catalogs for group entitlement are exclusively dedicated to the distinguished membership they are created for. Customizable solution bundles, on the other hand, span all membership groups without restriction and the same instance of a solution bundle may be arbitrarily included for all customer types at the discretion of the marketing and sales administrators."

In view of the above, the key difference between Henson and the claimed invention is in this use of subset catalogs to define the scope (meaning, all catalog parts that can be ordered) of a solution bundle. This is illustrated with reference to the attached drawing figure which relates to the subject matter shown in Figure 2 of the application, and is provided herewith to better understand how the invention differs from the cited references.

With reference to the attached Figure, it should be understood that the "new"

features of the invention related to the general public access at 4 and 5 to the Bundles 1 and 2.

Prior to the invention, subset catalogs (i.e. a portion of the whole database which includes special prices for specific items for particular groups) were defined and processed according to a user group such as "SAMs Club Members", "Verizon Employees" or "ARRP Members". Each of these groups have there own subset catalog of the master catalog with special pricing established. Each catalog is given an ID and the product fulfillment area looks up that ID to determine the member has permission to purchase the item at a special price. That is, when person one two or three logs on, he or she provides a PIN number, and is provided access to the subset catalog, and the pricing or other benefits associated therewith.

The claimed invention extends and modifies this notion. In the case of solution bundles, each solution bundle is defined as a subset catalog and is given an ID. For example, a solution bundle might simply be a special price when two or more different items are sold at a lower price when purchased as a group (e.g., you get a lower price if you purchase X computer with Y monitor and Z printer). These solution bundles will be available to everybody (e.g., SAMs Club members 1, Verizon employees 2, AARP Members 3, and the general public 4 and 5). For exemplary purposes, the figure identifies two solution bundles, one for monitors and one for speakers. In the practice of this invention, the subset catalog contains the eligible products and discount prices that is established for the solution bundle. This catalog looks no different to the product fulfillment area and is processed the same way. However, there is no entitled membership involved with solution bundles (i.e., essentially everyone is a member as is shown on the drawing). This is what is meant by the claim language processing the virtual entitled group, without distinction with other entitled groups, by back end fulfillment systems and ancillary e-commerce services, (as opposed to the open-ended interpretation provided in the office action), and this provides an important convenience to the supplier.

Thus, a member of the general public might log on to the database, and on the database, he or she will be presented with the opportunity to purchase certain solution bundles. He or she will be able to purchase one or more solution bundles, whether or not he is a member of an authorized group (1-3). Then, the backend processing fulfillment systems will treat the fulfillment as it would any other solution bundle.

In short, the prior art and Henson describe a "customer centric" approach which is quite different from the "supplier centric" approach of the claimed invention. Further, Henson does not describe a method or system with mapping of the customizable solution bundle into a subset catalog of the master catalog containing preselected marketable elements, and processing of the virtual entitled group without distinction from other entitled groups by back end fulfillment systems and ancillary e-commerce services as is required in the claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 3, 4, and 6-10 are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed.

Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0510 (IBM-Yorktown).

Respectfully submitted,



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